

March 18, 1975

that in the increasing economic pressures of the time, that the court system should, as much as possible, pay for itself out-of-court costs and, therefore, the bill was reported out of committee. We urge its approval.

PRESIDENT: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I know that the cost of everything is increasing. When the cost of obtaining justice increases, it's a serious and a grave matter and I wish the members of the body would take note to this bill. In the municipal courts and the courts at the lower levels these are the places where the ordinary or the impoverished people come in contact with the so called criminal justice system. In this instance the word criminal could define or describe the way the court system is conducted. Many times these people do not have an attorney at all, or they have a shyster who is totally incompetent, or they have a public defender who may be too busy to give proper concern and consideration to their cases. The ones who are least able to support the cost of the court system are the ones who are going to be convicted and wind up having to pay these costs. I'm opposed to increasing court costs. I'm opposed to the very concept of a justice system deriving its upkeep from the cases that appear before it. I'm going to put a motion on the desk to indefinitely postpone this bill. I cannot support it. I did not endorse it. Since it is a matter that I think is very serious and ought to be considered by the Legislature, I would not oppose its total discussion. Prior to submitting my motion to indefinitely postpone, I'm going to wait and give anybody, who would like to speak, an opportunity to speak in defense of the bill before I move to kill it. My intention is to prevent a further increase in court costs.

PRESIDENT: Senator Dickinson.

CLERK: Mr. President, there is a motion to amend on the desk. Which do you want . . .

PRESIDENT: Read the motion . . . or the amendment Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Read amendment (found on page 931 of Journal).

PRESIDENT: Chair recognizes Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, the only purpose of this amendment is to utilize some of these increased costs that Senator Luedtke wants to go where I think they'll do the most good, which is highway safety. It's really that simple. The amendment was tried in committee. Senator Barnett and Senator Luedtke opposed it. They thought this money . . . the purpose was worthwhile but they should have gone directly through the Appropriations Committee. I'm not going to argue rightly or wrongly on that. It's my understanding, from Mr. Sullivan, that they did take this approach but were directed back this way. As I say, I don't know the correctness of that. All I do know is the highway safety money is needed. If the money is just put in, as Senator Luedtke wants, all it's really going to be used for is a big increase in judges salaries. If you're going to increase the cost at all, let's put the money where it will do the most good. I think the most good, right now, would be highway safety, for a portion of this money.